MSC MONITOR
MAT-SU COLLEGE SPRING 2006

Outstanding MSC Student

By: Jason Brewington

James Donald Robinson (J.D.) was born on January 22, 1968 in Topeka, KS. He attended Washburn Rural High School as the class of 1985. Until the start of his collegiate experience J.D. had always thought that he had been one credit short of graduation. Upon receiving his high school transcripts to begin college J.D. found out that he had indeed graduated. J.D. had gone for 17 years believing he didn't have a High School diploma. Consequently, this had kept J.D. from applying for state and growth opportunities that require a high school diploma. With this new information it gave him the drive and desire to achieve a very high collegiate standard. According to J.D. "*I am definitely more motivated to succeed with good marks because I have seen in the work environment how it truly does make a difference. One of the things I have focused on is making sure that all my classes pertain not only to the field I am in but to general business and administration skills as well*". J.D.'s current GPA is a 3.94 and he is expected to graduate with an AAS in Architectural Drafting this coming spring.

As well as being a Dean's list student, J.D. is also a father, family man, and a den leader for pack 360 of Finger Lake Elementary School.
As a Den Leader J.D. went to scout camp with his son this past

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Senior Discounts and Rising Tuition: Why and How Much?

By: Gary M. Ellis

Rising tuition costs seem to be increasingly common of late and many students are probably wondering why these changes are necessary, if indeed they are.
As of this fall, for example, there has been a ten percent increase in tuition for a current total of $109 per credit hour (0-299 classes). Another ten percent jump is slated for next fall with an additional seven percent increase for at least one year following that.

While few seem to be particularly fond of these increases, one would do well to consider the facts behind them.

For instance, the amount of state funding that Mat-Su College receives is minimal in comparison to most other state funded institutions. The Mat-Su College budget is approximately eight million dollars, yet the college only receives about three

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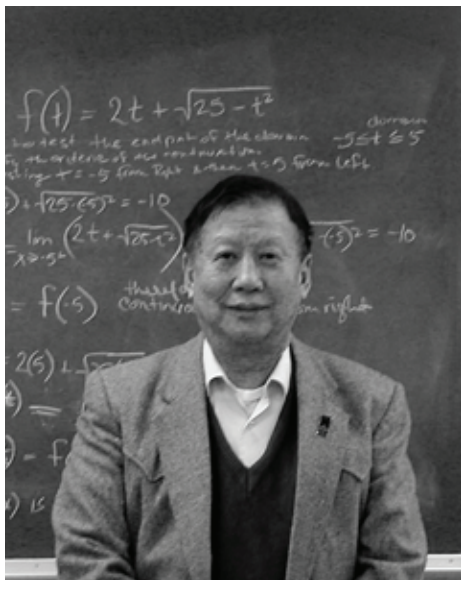
A Closer Look at Dr. Ping-Tung "PT" Chang



By Brittany Staso Maresh

Dr. Ping-Tung Chang has taught at the Matanuska-Susitna College for the past seventeen years. He was Alaska's 2001 Professor of the Year, sponsored by the Carnegie Institution in Washington, DC. An immigrant from Taiwan, Dr. Chang has taught at the University of Wisconsin at Waukesha, Georgia State University, Augusta College Georgia, and Taiwan Normal University at Taipei, Taiwan. Dr. Chang also taught at and served as the head of the Math Education Department at Laredo State University, in Texas, where they offered a Master's Degree in Math Education for the area high school teachers.

Dr. Chang has a teaching Vita that extends over forty pages, including publications and presented papers and speeches in China, Austria, as well as Budapest, Dublin, Quebec, Australia, and Tokyo. Dr. Chang has accomplished a lot in his life, not the least of which was starting a scholarship fund, the Dr. Ping-Tung Chang Scholarship.

Dr. Chang has received many awards for his teaching. He has the distinction of receiving citations for his accomplishments in mathematics by both the twenty-first and twenty-second Alaska State Legislatures. Dr. Chang was awarded both the University of Alaska Teaching Excellence Award and the Chancellor's Outstanding Faculty Award in 1998. He received the 1999 Mathematics Association of America Pacific Northwest Section award for Distinguished Teaching of Mathematics at a University. Dr. Chang was also awarded the 2003 Distinguished Teaching Award by the Alumni Association of University of Alaska Anchorage.

Dr. Chang insists his students call him PT and feel comfortable in the classroom. He believes that unless the students are comfortable, they will not be as capable at learning. He helps students learn, whether it means keeping the classroom environment a place students want to be or putting in extra time to help them understand their materials. In PT's class, there is no such thing as math anxiety. In a lot of classrooms, there is a lot of pressure. Do well on this test or you're doomed to fail. PT has eliminated that, and made a classroom where students learn math, rather than memorize formulas for tests.

For the past seventeen years, PT has provided Cup O'Noodles for his students, so that they don't have to be hungry in class. He has had cold colas in his miniature refrigerator at all times, in case a student gets thirsty during class, as well as cookies and coffee for anyone who wishes to drop by and get a little extra help on math, or just needs the extra pick-me-up first thing in the morning.

PT gets to school early, and even participates in Math club. PT is obviously a professor who never forgot his own time in college, where students spend hours sitting in a classroom that doesn't allow food or drink, praying that someone else would ask a question so they didn't have to ask it and feel stupid. It is that willingness to go out of his way, and a refusal to treat helping students as an inconvenience, that makes PT the sort of professor that every student should get the chance to enjoy.

Nine Inch Nails - Concert review

By: Hilary Currey

Genius…. Could there be another word for what Trent Reznor brought to the stage in Seattle on September 23rd? It was a truly phenomenal experience that I will treasure for some time. My husband and I flew out of Anchorage on a Thursday to catch the Nine Inch Nails show at the Key Arena in Seattle. After many hurdles, from cancellations of planes to having to sleep in the back of the car because we were too early for our hotel, the concert proved to be worth it all.

Over the course of a decade Trent Reznor has done some phenomenal things. He has started his own recording label, Nothing Records, contributed to Lollapalooza and Woodstock '94, produced/executive produced three CD's of Marilyn Manson, various soundtracks including Oliver Stone's, "Natural Born Killers", released a home movie and created music for the game "Quake".

After a six year wait in between Nine Inch Nail's last album, "The Fragile" and the new album, "With Teeth", Trent Reznor has proven he is still able to astound audiences with his angry, meaningful messages. Armed with intellect and an extraordinary vocabulary, Reznor is able to transform his poetic creations into a collaboration of different industrial sounds and political statements.

In the song, "Only", Reznor takes a strong stance on current political issues by using technology in a way that most would be afraid to. As the song strummed it's famous intro you could feel the anticipation and anxiety in the air. A white cloth drops in front of the band. Just then the blank white screen lights up with graphic images of animals killing one another in order to survive, something you might see on the Discovery channel. The song progresses and you start to get a definite feeling of Reznor's political standpoint on the war and our president. The images changed to show President Bush dancing in the white house as he grins holding his dear wife safe in his arms. Then just as sudden as

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Why You Should Be Involved

By: Desiré Shepler

There is no question that the academic aspect of college life can be quite overwhelming. There are after all tests to be studied for, papers to be written and books to be read. With all of these tasks to be done it is often easy for students to miss out on another side of college life, extracurricular activities.

When students are asked why they don't get involved in any extracurricular activities they cite lives outside of school and heavy course loads, stating they are simply too busy for anything else. What students may not realize is that involvement in extracurricular activities can actually serve to enhance their classroom experiences. Being involved in activities allows students a feeling of being more involved in their college environment while forming connections with their fellow classmates.

Students who plan to continue on to graduate school especially should seek out an activity to participate in. Not only are graduate schools looking for students who excel academically, they are also looking for well rounded students who have applied themselves in the realm of extracurricular activities. This does not mean that you should rush out and join every available club. Rather, it is important to pick an activity that allows you as an individual an opportunity to show quality involvement and a high level of commitment to the activity you've chosen.

Yes it is easy to be overwhelmed with the academic aspect of college, it happens to all of us at some point, especially at times like midterms and finals. It is also important to keep in mind, however, that academics aren't all college is about. Whether you are a student fresh out of high school or a nontraditional student, remember this, this is your college experience. What better way to enjoy this time then by being involved in your college environment.

We here at the Mat-Su Monitor are always looking for students who want to get involved. So what types of students are we looking for? If you have ever written anything and dreamed of seeing your name in print, you are exactly what we are looking for. If you are interested in sales or management, you are exactly what we are looking for. If you are none of these things but are looking for something to be involved in to enhance your college experience, you are exactly what we are looking for.

Crossing Frontiers in Matanuska Valley History

By: Erik Hirschmann

The idea of the "frontier" has frequently permeated the Matanuska Valley's recent history. Only in the English language does "frontier" mean openness, fluidity, and possibility, as opposed to permanent, fixated boundaries in other languages. Alaskans, like many other Americans, have often embraced the idea of the "frontier" as part of their fundamental identity. As the valley grows rapidly in population and economic development during the early twenty-first century local residents indeed have open, fluid possibilities for the future. However in an age where we are drowning in information while starving for wisdom, expanding our frontier of historical memory has perhaps never been more vital. By studying past valley residents, their decisions, and the interplay of local, regional, and national events in history, the current generation can make wise decisions in crossing the frontier of the early twenty-first century.

A century ago valley residents were experiencing boom times and rapid changes. The Gold Rush Era was in full swing in Alaska and the town of Knik was growing quickly. The largest and busiest trade center on Cook Inlet, the town fed supplies to the interior gold mines and shipped Alaskan gold to Seattle. By 1915 the town and its surrounding area had just under a thousand residents, and Knik residents were optimistic about their town's future. But the town's days were numbered. In 1915 construction of the Alaska Railroad began with its headquarters at Ship Creek, later named Anchorage. Financed entirely by the federal government, the Alaska Railroad would permanently alter the economic and demographic patterns in the valley. By 1917 most of Knik's population had left for other parts of Alaska, particularly the new town of Wasilla that was being born along the route of the Alaska Railroad. But with U. S. entry into World War One in April 1917 many Alaskans departed for the lower 48 for work

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Student

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summer, it was the first time in over 20 years that J.D. had attended scout camp. J.D. believes that being a den leader is his community effort to make our local kids better people by teaching morals, good spirit, and the will to help others. J.D. also believes Cub Scouts is a great way to encourage a father-son relationship. J.D.'s immediate family includes Nate, a vivacious blonde haired 3rd Grade boy, Robin his wonderful wife, and Marshall who is attending military academy. J.D. says "*My family is rare, no serious fighting and we all love each other and get along quite well. I just wish I could see all of them more often.*"

When I asked J.D. about being an outstanding student his answer was, "*all those people that never game me a chance missed out on a good thing.*" Mat-Su College didn't miss out on this good thing. J.D. is an inspiration to other students and peers alike. J.D.'s work ethic and devotion to his career and degree are unsurpassable and inspirational to all around him. As a friend he motivates others to do well. J.D. is doing so well in his degree that he is currently employed as a CAD technician for Dean Architects.

Mr.. Robinson was once a roadie for several major musical tours such as, Johnny Cash, Nine Inch Nails, Ozzy and Santana: as well as theater acts such as, George Carlin, Gallagher, and Grease. Listening to his stories and recollections of his youth makes you wonder how one man can be so diverse and so good at everything he sets his mind too. J.D. Robinson only knows how to succeed, making him the ultimate student and example of what you can do with your life when you set your mind to it. Mat-Su College is lucky to have him as a student, Lab Aid, and inspiration to other students.

Tuition

Continued from Page 1

and a half million dollars from the state. This leaves four and a half million dollars that the Mat-Su College has to generate itself. Accordingly, Mat-Su College has a very high tuition rate for a junior college. These increases, however, apply only to per credit hour tuition and do not in any way apply to specific class fees (such as laboratory equipment in a lab class, or computer lab fees), or textbook prices (which are controlled by the publishers).

In addition to these tuition increases, this years has seen some changes in Mat-Su College's senior citizen discount policy. Previously, for people 60 years of age and over, there was a 100% waiver on tuition, provided there is class space available after all paying students are enrolled. Senior citizens enrolled in classes with additional fees, however, had to pay those fees as well buy their required textbooks. A recent proposal submitted to the Board of Regents raised the minimum age for senior citizen discount eligibility from 60 years of age to 65 years of age and in place of the 100% tuition waiver, cut that waiver back to 50%. Senior citizens already eligible for the tuition waiver before the revisions took place will still be able to receive it. Part of the reasoning behind this revision is a desire to be in concert with age requirements for full social security retirement benefits, as well as to ensure that no unintentional university expenses are incurred by the waiver program.

On September 20-21, 2005, the Board of Regents met and approved the revisions regarding both the senior citizen waiver program and the tuition rates for the 2007 academic year. Some may regard this decision and their resulting changes to be for the worse, but it is well to remember that college tuition at UAA is still readily affordable even with additional increases, especially when one considers the costs of attending college out of state. In regards to the senior citizen waivers, a 50% waiver is by no means inconsequential, and will still potentially allow senior citizens to receive a high-quality education that they might otherwise have been unable to.

Nine

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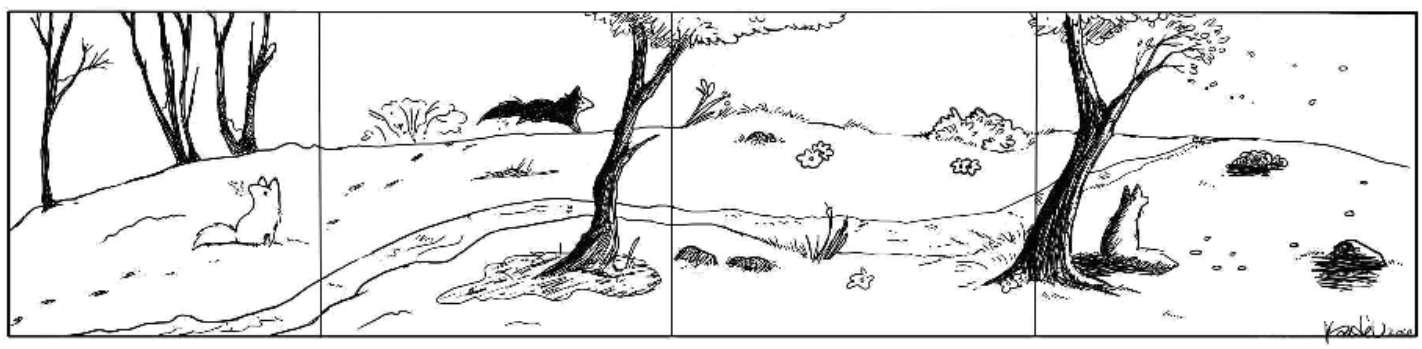
that scene had come, images of wartime violence and orphaned children plague the screen, making the audience go insane with cheers and lighters.

Overall, it was an incredible experience and well worth the money to see these icons of modern industrial music perform. Reznor was able to appeal to old and young fans alike with a repertoire which included the songs, "Head Like a Hole", "Closer", and "Kinda I Want To". Overall the crowd was a bit mellower than I thought it would have been considering this was a Nine Inch Nail's concert. However, it was a good thing that security wasn't judging entry on looks of potential offenders because most of the seats would have been empty. While there was a lot of the hard-core gothic dressed people turned out for this concert you would also see people like me, which had been listening to NIN since the beginning. It was nice to see that, overall this mix of people could all get along, sit back and enjoy the ride only Trent Reznor and Nine Inch Nails can provide.

Think you can come up with a cartoon?
Lets see what you got!
Send cartoon submissions to the editor at
editor@matsu.alaska.edu



Frontiers

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in war industries. The decline in the valley's population also accelerated with the completion of the Alaska Railroad in 1923. Many railroad workers largely left Alaska, and most interior gold mines were in decline. By the early 1920s there were fewer than two hundred homesteaders left in the valley, and the future of Wasilla was uncertain.

With the decline of gold mining in Alaska and the absence of large-scale federal spending in the 1920s, the few remaining valley residents began diversifying their economic activities. Most residents engaged in a variety of economic pursuits such as agriculture, mining, fur trapping, freighting, retail, and the railroad. Early Wasilla residents put a lot of effort into building a vibrant community—in 1931 the 150 residents of Wasilla built a community hall with donated materials and volunteer labor. Now the Dorothy Page Museum, the Wasilla Community Hall sponsored a variety of social events ranging from school graduations to bingo games to wedding receptions. In 1932 high school classes were taught for the first time in Wasilla next to Lake Lucille. Little did valley residents know that the quiet life of the "Old Alaska" was about to change forever in the near future.

By the eve of World War Two Wasilla experienced a small boom from renewed federal spending in the Matanuska Valley. In 1935 the federal government began investing millions of dollars in an agricultural colony made up of families from the upper Midwestern states. Federal money led to the establishment of Palmer and an increased customer base for Wasilla merchants, plus high paying jobs in 1940-1941 at the new military bases near Anchorage. In 1942 Wasilla received electric service for the first time, but with U. S. entry into World War Two many local valley residents left for jobs in Anchorage or the lower 48. The Independence Mine at Hatcher Pass was also shut down by the federal government, since gold mining was declared to be a non-essential industry in wartime. As with World War One it looked like Wasilla and perhaps even Palmer might go the way of Knik in 1915, but a few hundred valley residents hung on by selling agricultural products to the military bases and Anchorage.

After 1945, the valley's population slowly increased as war veterans and a few Anchorage residents started new homesteads. Homesteading occurred not only in the Wasilla-Palmer area but also in the Houston and Big Lake areas. Palmer incorporated as a city in 1951, with Wasilla following in 1974. In 1964 the Matanuska-Susitna Borough was created, with the borough population standing at about four thousand people. Homes in Palmer were typically below twenty thousand dollars at this time.

By the 1970s the Matanuska Valley experienced startling growth as the Alaska oil boom kicked in and money flowed into south central Alaska. Real estate values also rose with talk of moving the state capital to Willow during the 1970s and early 1980s. Roads had been improved to the point where many former Anchorage residents began buying land and homes in large quantities in the valley, starting a trend that continues to this day at an accelerated pace—residing in the valley and commuting to Anchorage for work. Home prices in Palmer were now typically above sixty thousand dollars. With the state awash in oil revenues new roads and schools were built at a furious pace. However by the middle 1980s the bottom fell out of the local valley economy after low oil prices negatively impacted the regional Alaska economy. Suddenly the rapid population influx of previous years was reversed, and homes and land values sunk considerably. Valley residents once again questioned to varying degrees the long-term viability of their communities. Only beginning in the middle

1990s was there a slow but steady recovery, a recovery that now has evolved into a record pace of growth.

Today the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is the fastest growing part of Alaska, with a population of nearly eighty thousand people that is increasing very quickly. Home prices now usually range in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and land is a hot commodity. Roads are being expanded and highways broadened. Yet problems remain, particularly whether the traditions and institutions begun by earlier generations will persist into the future. Many longtime residents of the valley, who stuck through the wild economic fluctuations of the past, are concerned that newcomers and the younger generations are losing sight of what makes the valley a special unique place. Valley residents face important decisions over how best to grow while preserving the dynamic and colorful history of the area. This is not easy. When one considers the pace of change, present challenges are arguably no less daunting than those faced by residents in decades past. What is the fundamental identity of the Matanuska Valley today? Where are we headed with all the growth? How can we replicate the vitality and heroism of those families who remained in the valley through thick and thin? Broadening our understanding of generations past can be a vital tool

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Pictures of the Contemporary Art Class being taught by visiting artist Enrique Badaro.

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Bookkeeping Emphasis

Lori Jo Oswald
Office Technology
Desktop Publishing & Graphic

Structural Drafting

Randy D. Kallem

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Richard Wilton Estes
Jeffery K. Johnson
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Jeremiah L. Bowlus
Jody Ann Hall
James Patrick Nelson
Thomas Swavely

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University of Alaska Anchorage

University of Alaska Fairbanks

University of Alaska Southeast

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Associate of Applied Science, Early Childhood Development

Sharon Lynnette Bulawa
Sylvia R. GreenLinda ReNae Huycke
Dawn Michelle Noble

Judy Kay Schurosky
James Martin Woods

College of Arts & Sciences
Bachelor of Arts
Anthropology

Jean Lea Angus

College of Health & Social Welfare
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Holly B. Mooney
Disabilities Emphasis

Bachelor of Social Work
Hope M. Haag

College of Business & Public Policy

Bachelor of Business Administration, Finance
Sarah Marie Heath Burdan

College of Education
Master of Education

Early Childhood Special Education
Barbara L. Humphreys

School of Natural Resources & Agricultural Sciences

Bachelor of Science, Natural Resources Management
James E. Hazlett
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Dana Louise Dodds
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Harmony J. Munson
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